in FIGs. 1 and 2A, first fixture 110 has a convexoconcave shape wherein inner surface 116 has a concave shape and outer surface 114 has a convex shape. In alternative embodiments, first fixture 110 has a planoconcave shape wherein inner surface 116 has a concave shape and outer surface 114 has a flat shape.--

A3

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 4 with the following rewritten paragraph:

--Second fixture 120 further includes inner surface 126. Outer surface 124 and inner surface 126 are continuously joined by second edge 122. In the embodiment shown in FIGs. 1 and 2A, second fixture 120 has a convexoconcave shape wherein inner surface 126 has a concave shape and outer surface 124 has a convex shape. In alternative embodiments, second fixture 120 has a planoconcave shape wherein inner surface 126 has a concave shape and outer surface 124 has a flat shape.--

A4

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 12 with the following rewritten paragraph:

--Fixture 110 and fixture 120 (FIGs. 1, 2A, 2B, 3) comprise truncated portions of spherical-shaped shell 410. Referring to FIG. 4C, plane 420 bisects shell 410 to form first truncated spherical shell 420 and second truncated spherical shell 430. First truncated spherical shell 420 includes outer surface 424, inner surface 426, and edge 422 which continuously joins inner outer surface 424 and inner surface 426. Fixture 110 (FIG. 3) and/or fixture 120 (FIG. 3) can comprise first truncated spherical shell 420.--

A5

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 8 with the following rewritten paragraph:

--Referring again to FIG. 5, first fixture 100 exerts first force 550 against object 310 urging object 310 into tight contact with second fixture 120. Similarly, second fixture 120 exerts

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second force 560 against object 310 urging object 310 into tight contact with first fixture 110. First force 550 in combination with second force 560 securely but releaseably holds ornamental object 310 in clasp apparatus 300. The magnitude of first force 550 can be adjusted by varying, for example, the area of inner surface 116 in contact with object 310. Similarly, the magnitude of second force 560 can be adjusted by, for example, varying the area of inner surface 126 in contact with object 310. As those areas of contact are increased, forces 550 and 560, respectively are increased. First force 550 and second force 560 can also be adjusted by varying the thickness and composition of member 130. For example, as the flexural modulus of member 130 increases, the magnitudes of first force 550 and second force 560 also increase.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 7 with the following rewritten paragraph:

--FIG. 7 shows an embodiment wherein closure apparatus 710 includes first connector 720 and second connector 730. First connector 720 includes proximal end (not shown in FIG. 7) disposed on first end portion 620 (FIG. 6) and distal end 724 extending outwardly from first end portion 620 in the direction of second end portion 630 (FIG. 6). Second connector 730 includes proximal end (not shown in FIG. 7) connected to second end portion 630 (FIG. 6) and distal end 734 extending outwardly from second end portion 630 in the direction of first end portion 620.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 14 with the following rewritten paragraph:

--First connector 720 includes first surface 723 and opposing surface 725. Surface 725 includes a ratchet portion 726 comprising alternating elevated segments 727 and lowered segments 728. Second connector 730 includes first surface 733 and opposing surface 735. Surface 735 includes a ratchet portion 736 comprising alternating elevated segments 737 and lowered segments 738. Distal end 724 is disposed adjacent distal end 734 such that ratchet

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portion 726 slidingly mates with ratchet portion 736.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 4 with the following rewritten paragraph:

--Referring to FIG. 8, closure apparatus 610 (FIG. 6) comprises first connector 820, second connector 830, and body 810. First connector 820 includes proximal end (not shown in FIG. 8) disposed on first end portion 620 (FIG. 6) and first threaded distal end 824 extending outwardly from first end portion 620 in the direction of second end portion 630 (FIG. 6). Second connector 830 includes proximal end (not shown in FIG. 7) connected to second end portion 630 (FIG. 6) and second threaded distal end 834 extending outwardly from second end portion 630 in the direction of first end portion 620.--

A9

IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly cancel claims 1-16, without prejudice.

Please add new claims 17-34, reading as follows:

sub C1

--17. A jewelry clasp for releaseably holding an ornamental object, comprising:

a first fixture comprising a first convexoconcave structure having a first inner concave surface, a first outer convex surface, and a first edge continuously joining said first inner concave surface and said first outer convex surface;

A10

a second fixture comprising a second convexoconcave structure having a second inner concave surface and a second outer convex surface, and a second edge continuously joining said second inner concave surface and said second outer convex surface; and

a spring member having a first end and a second end, wherein said first end is affixed to said first outer convex surface of said first fixture, and wherein said second end is affixed to said second outer convex surface of said second fixture.

18. The clasp of claim 17, further comprising:

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